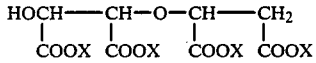
-continued

Component	Wt. %
Isopropyl Alcohol	3%
Pine Oil	6%
Water, Fragrance, Miscellaneous	Balance to 100%

What is claimed is:

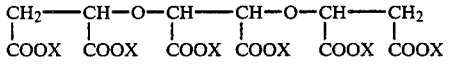
1. An ether carboxylate composition suitable for use as a builder in detergent formulations, said composition comprising

(a) from about 1% to 99% by weight of a tartrate monosuccinate component of the structure:



wherein X is H or a salt-forming cation; and

(b) from about 1% to 99% by weight of a tartrate disuccinate component of the structure:



wherein X is H or a salt-forming cation.

2. A composition according to claim 1 wherein the weight ratio of tartrate monosuccinate component to tartrate disuccinate component ranges from about 97:3 to 20:80.

3. A composition according to claim 2 wherein the tartrate monosuccinate and the tartrate disuccinate components are in the form of their fully neutralized sodium, potassium, monoethanolamine or triethanolamine salts.

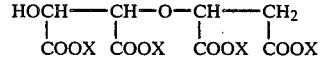
4. A composition according to claim 3 wherein the tartrate monosuccinate component comprises from about 10% to 98% by weight of the composition; wherein the tartrate disuccinate component comprises from about 2% to 90% by weight of the composition; and wherein the weight ratio of tartrate monosuccinate to tartrate disuccinate ranges from about 95:5 to 40:60.

5. A composition according to claim 3 wherein the composition contains up to about 70% by weight of an additional component selected from the group consisting of water, malate salts, maleate salts, tartrate salts, fumarate salts, calcium salts, and combinations of said optional components.

6. A composition according to claim 5 wherein the composition contains no more than about 10 mole percent of calcium based upon total moles of the tartrate monosuccinate and tartrate disuccinate present in said composition.

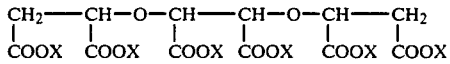
7. A composition according to claim 6 wherein the weight ratio of tartrate monosuccinate to tartrate disuccinate ranges from about 95:5 to 40:60.

8. A tartrate monosuccinic acid, or a salt thereof, of the structure:



wherein X is H or a salt-forming cation.

9. Tartrate disuccinic acid, or a salt thereof, of the structure:



wherein X is H or a salt-forming cation.

10. A process for preparing a combination of ether carboxylates useful as a detergent builder, which method comprises

(a) forming an aqueous reaction mixture comprising from about 20% to 60% by weight of both calcium and monovalent cation salts of maleic acid and tartaric acid, said mixture corresponding to the over-neutralized mixture which is formed by combining:

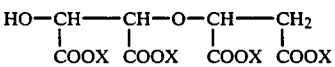
(i) maleic and tartaric acids in a maleic to tartaric molar ratio of from about 0.5:1 to about 8:1;

(ii) a source of calcium cations in an amount such that the molar ratio of calcium to tartaric acid ranges from about 0.1:1 to 2.0:1 with the ratio of moles of calcium to total moles of maleic and tartaric acid being less than 1; and

(iii) a neutralizing agent comprising an hydroxide of a monovalent cation in an amount such that the ratio of moles of monovalent cation to moles of maleic acid plus moles of tartaric acid minus moles of calcium ranges from about 2.1:1 to 3.8:1 and

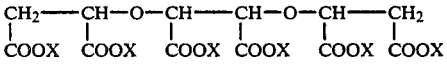
(b) maintaining said aqueous reaction mixture at a temperature of from about 20° C. to 120° C. for a time period sufficient to form a reaction product mixture of

(i) tartrate monosuccinate of the fomula:



wherein X is a salt-forming cation; and

(ii) tartrate disuccinate of the formula:



wherein X is a salt-forming cation; and

(c) reducing the calcium content of said reaction product mixture to the extent that the molar ratio of calcium to the tartrate succinate reaction products is less than about 1:10.

11. A process according to claim 10 wherein the reaction mixture comprises from about 40% to 55% by weight of said salts of maleic and tartaric acids.

12. A process according to claim 11 wherein

(a) the maleic acid salt is selected from sodium and potassium maleate;

(b) the tartaric acid salt is selected from sodium and potassium tartrate; and

(c) the calcium cations are provided by calcium hydroxide; and

(d) the monovalent cation-containing neutralizing agent is selected from sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide and ammonium hydroxide.

13. A process according to claim 12 wherein the maleic acid salt and tartaric acid salt reactants are formed in the reaction mixture in situ.

14. A process according to claim 12 wherein

(a) the molar ratio of maleic acid to tartaric acid used in forming the reaction mixture ranges from about 0.9:1 to 1.2:1 and